

# **Project Narrative**

*For the:*

**Costco Wholesale**

*Located at:*

**779 & 789 Connecticut Avenue  
Norwalk, Connecticut**

*Prepared for Submission to:*

**City of Norwalk, Connecticut**

August 31, 2023

*Prepared for:*

**Costco Wholesale Corporation**  
45940 Horseshoe Drive, Suite 150  
Sterling, Virginia 20166

*Prepared by:*



## **BL Companies**

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BL Project Number: 202718

Applicant/Owner Costco Wholesale Corporation seeks to redevelop portions of the existing parcels located at 779 and 789 Connecticut Avenue in Norwalk, Connecticut. They are proposing to demolish the existing, vacant hotel in order to expand and improve the existing Costco parking garage and relocate the Costco tire center to a new building along the Connecticut Avenue frontage. Review and approval by the City of Norwalk Inland Wetland Agency is required for this project because portions of the work are located within the 100' upland review area for Five Mile River and the 50' upland review area of an existing stormwater detention basin. No work is proposed within the wetlands or watercourse.

The adjacent parcels, which total roughly 13 acres in size overall, are currently improved by (1) the Costco retail warehouse and associated parking garage at 779 Connecticut Avenue (the "Costco Parcel"), and (2) the former Doubletree hotel and associated improvements (now vacant) at 789 Connecticut Avenue (the "Hotel Parcel") (collectively, the "Property"). Both properties have been developed with buildings, parking garages, associated paved parking areas, utility connections, site lighting, a stormwater detention system on the Costco parcel, landscaping, and site lighting.

The Five Mile River and the Town of Darien town line form the western boundary of the Property with Richards Avenue to the east and I-95 to the south. The northern portion of the site—at the intersection of Connecticut Avenue and Richards Avenue— abuts the existing retail development at 777 Connecticut Avenue. Currently that site is occupied by a FedEx Office Print and Shop Center, Liquor store, and AT&T store. The driveway to Costco is shared with this retail complex.

Resource areas on the site include an existing wetland area adjacent to the Five Mile River along the western edge of the existing Costco parking garage. The wetland and watercourse are described in the attached "Wetland and Watercourse Evaluation Report" prepared by BL Companies and listed below:

- Five Mile River with an associated FEMA Floodway, FEMA Floodplain (Zone X) and 100' Watercourse Upland Review Area.
- An existing stormwater basin with an associated 50' Wetland Upland Review Area

There are no known rare species on these parcels.

Soil testing revealed that the subsurface conditions at the project site are generally consist of granular fill underlain by a natural glacial deposit and/or bedrock. Groundwater was encountered approximately 20 feet below existing site grade, corresponding to an approximate elevation of 47 feet. Soil infiltration rates ranged from  $\pm 0.18$  to 8.24.

The proposed project will combine the lots and demolish the existing improvements on the Hotel Parcel, including the vacant hotel building and associated paving, utilities, and all other site appurtenances. The existing two-level parking garage on the Costco Parcel will be expanded to provide additional parking and safer circulation. A new 5,400 square foot standalone tire center will be constructed along Connecticut Avenue frontage. The existing driveway entrance on the

Hotel Parcel will remain and allow for direct access to the lower level of the parking garage. The existing entrance to the Costco Parcel will be modified to provide access to the Hotel Parcel while maintaining the direct connection to the upper parking deck leading to the main entrance to the Costco retail warehouse. The proposed tire center with associated parking will be accessible from the existing Costco Parcel entrance, as well as from the lower level of the parking structure. The proposed project will provide utility connections for the tire center and parking garage expansion, and the entire site will have upgraded sight lighting.

There will be no work within the FEMA floodway. There is an existing retaining wall along the western edge of the Hotel Parcel and against the Five Mile River. The retaining wall is within the FEMA floodway and will remain.

There will be no work within the wetland or watercourse area. Construction equipment will enter the site from Connecticut Avenue via a construction entrance. All equipment will remain outside of the wetland and watercourse areas.

A summary of resource areas and proposed work within the upland review areas is below:

- 100' Watercourse Upland Review Area
  - Existing Impervious Area
    - Under the existing condition there is approximately 33,000 sf of impervious area in the 100' watercourse Upland Review Area.
    - Under the proposed conditions, that number is greatly reduced to have only approximately 2,400 sf of impervious area within the Upland Review Area.
  - Distance to Site Improvements
    - The existing distance from the river to impervious area is 2.6 feet.
    - The proposed condition will provide 68.1 feet between the river and impervious areas, significantly increasing the existing distance and providing additional protection for the river with new landscaped areas.
- 50' wetland upland review area
  - Existing Impervious Area
    - The existing impervious area located within the 50' wetland upland review area is 2,476 sf.
    - This will essentially remain the same, as less than 1sf of work is proposed in this area.
  - Distance to Site Improvements
    - The existing distance from the wetland boundary to impervious area will remain unchanged.
- Temporary & Permanent Disturbances
  - Watercourse Upland Review Area – The temporary area of disturbance in the watercourse upland review area will be approximately 24,800 sf with only 8,200 sf of permanent disturbance.
  - Wetland Upland Review Area – The temporary area of disturbance in the wetland upland review area is approximately 650 sf with no permanent disturbance.

- Wetland/Watercourse Areas – There is no work proposed within the wetland or watercourse areas.

The Applicants have considered alternatives. The proposed alternative would be to leave the site as is. The most beneficial option is construction of the project as proposed because it will decrease the amount of existing impervious surface area within the upland review areas by nearly 30,000 sf. These existing impervious areas will be converted to landscaping and greenspace, thereby providing an additional buffer for the watercourse, and improving the protection of the resource areas. The quality of stormwater leaving the site will also be greatly improved, given that there are no stormwater quality treatment structures on the Hotel Parcel currently. Under the existing condition, runoff from the Hotel Parcel is discharged directly to the watercourse with no treatment measures, whereas the proposed project will include improved stormwater systems, including stormwater quality treatment in general conformance with the City of Norwalk Drainage Manual and The Connecticut Stormwater Quality Manual. As described in further detail in the drainage report submitted with this application, erosion control measures will be implemented prior to construction and maintained until site stabilization. Silt fence will be installed along the edge of the site along the river and wetland area. Catch basin silt sacks will be installed on all stormwater inlets, and temporary seeding will be applied to all exposed soils to mitigate sediment from reaching the water resources.

The project is expected to begin in the Fall of 2023 and to be completed in Fall of 2024.